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**Mayor Emanuel Breaks Ground on New Runway at O'Hare International Airport**

*Final runway makes O'Hare more efficient, reduces delays and paves way for future terminal expansion*

Mayor Rahm Emanuel today marked the next step in modernizing O'Hare International Airport with the groundbreaking of O'Hare's newest runway, 9C/27C. The runway is one part of a \$1.3 billion infrastructure plan announced earlier this year by the Chicago Department of Aviation (CDA), Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), United Airlines and American Airlines. Today's groundbreaking kicks off the next step implementing this infrastructure plan, which will enhance the passenger experience at O'Hare by reducing delays and increasing the airport's capacity.

With 9C/27C, a modern, six parallel runway configuration at O'Hare will be complete. The 11,245-foot-long, 200-foot-wide runway will be the second largest at O'Hare, and its construction will create jobs and drive economic development in Chicago. City officials are ensuring local workforce participation is a priority. Towards this end, Walsh Construction – the company awarded the bid for the initial phase of the project – will host three job fairs throughout the city to ensure all residents of Chicago have a chance to learn about work opportunities. The Runway 9C/27C project alone is slated to support more than 4,900 jobs.

"O'Hare is the economic engine of Chicago – one of the main reasons why companies move to Chicago, bringing jobs for residents and economic growth to neighborhoods throughout the city," said Mayor Emanuel. "With this runway, we are taking the next step in strengthening O'Hare's role as the economic driver of the city for decades to come. The runway will bring benefits to travelers and residents, and ensures that O'Hare is not just the busiest airport in the world, but also the best airport in the world."

“As one of the busiest airports in the world, O’Hare International Airport is an important economic engine for Chicago and the region,” U.S. Senator Dick Durbin (D-IL) said. “This new runway, along with other airport projects, will improve travel times here and across the country. I will continue to prioritize federal investments that will further solidify O’Hare’s position as a vital global transportation hub.”

Runway 9C/27C will also help balance noise exposure among communities east and west of the airport. The city plans to ensure that sound insulation of all eligible homes and schools will commence and be completed before the runway opens.

“Construction of Runway 9C/27C will complete O’Hare’s parallel runway layout and provide Chicago with a 21st Century airfield,” said CDA Commissioner Ginger S. Evans. “This project significantly increases safety and efficiency, and addresses the impact of airport noise by balancing O’Hare’s airfield operations. I want to thank the FAA and our airline partners for making this project – which is of national significance – a reality.”

Construction of the runway will be split into phases to allow construction of two new hangars and other airfield projects. Construction will begin on the east portion of the runway, followed by the center and west portions of the runway, which will each be bid as individual projects.

With construction of the runway and other aspects of the \$1.3 billion infrastructure plan underway, the CDA and its airline partners will continue to focus on moving forward other parts of Mayor Emanuel’s larger modernization strategy for the airport, called *O’Hare 21*. As announced in recent weeks, the city and its airline partners are working together to design and develop a multi-billion dollar capital investment program at O’Hare that expands Terminal 5, redevelops Terminal 2, creates space for new gates, and supports tens of thousands of jobs and economic opportunities in Chicago. Other elements of *O’Hare 21* include: the arrival of three hotel development projects at O’Hare, which will more than double the current hotel capacity at the airport; the addition of five new American Airlines gates at O’Hare by 2018, representing the first major gate expansion since 1993. These improvements are driven by the Mayor’s vision that the airport should continue to serve as the economic engine for the city of Chicago long into the future.

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